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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: COUNTRY CLEARANCE GRANTED TO RUFFIN FOR TRAVEL TO  
ST. KITTS AND NEVIS

REF: STATE 88161

1. Embassy Bridgetown welcomes and grants clearance to Dr. John Ruffin to travel to St. Kitts and Nevis on July 13-18, 2007, for the purpose of attending the Inaugural Eastern Caribbean Conference on Health as the keynote speaker.

2. Per reftel, Embassy understands assistance is not requested.

3. Embassy Bridgetown requests an outbrief be provided to the Political/Economic Section relating to activities while in the region within 10 working days of completion of travel. Please provide the outbrief by telephone, 246/436-4950 X4230, or by fax at 246/227-4174.

4. Entry requirements: Mission policy is that all USG travelers to the region be in possession of a valid passport. There is a departure tax of 45 xcd (Eastern Caribbean) dollars or 16.50 U.S. dollars.

5. The exchange rate in St. Kitts and Nevis is 2.70 xcd (Eastern Caribbean) dollars for one U.S. dollar. U.S. currency, traveler's checks, and credit cards are routinely and widely accepted.

6. The following is general information pertaining to security and health considerations throughout the Eastern Caribbean:

#### Security

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In the Eastern Caribbean, foot travel outside of well-established tourist areas is not generally recommended, especially at night. Be vigilant when using public telephones or ATM machines near roadsides or quiet areas. As in many U.S. metropolitan areas, wearing expensive jewelry, carrying expensive objects, or carrying large amounts of cash should be avoided. Visitors should also safeguard valuables while at the beach. While hotels are generally safe, many visitors have experienced loss of unattended items. Hotel burglaries are not uncommon and all valuables should be locked in room safes if possible.

#### Health

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Throughout the Eastern Caribbean, the most likely threat to a visitor's health is sunburn. It takes several weeks to become accustomed to the heat and humidity. Prolonged exposure to the sun, without protection, causes sunburn and may ultimately result in sun-damaged skin or even skin cancer. Sunscreens should be used for protection. In Barbados, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines the major health threat is dengue fever, transmitted by mosquito.

Dengue cases are most often seen in the summer months. Persons should therefore protect themselves with insect repellent. There is a growing number of HIV/AIDS cases reported. The Eastern Caribbean enjoys clean and safe drinking water. Only routine boosters for immunizations (i.e., tetanus, diphtheria, and oral polio vaccine) are required when traveling to this region. Barbados has the best medical facilities of all the islands in the region and most of the medical specialties have practitioners here.

GILROY